Every Breath You Take by Bronze Shield

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Summary: After 353 days of being apart, Eleven isn't letting Mike get a moment out of her sight...

Every Breath You Take

The snow crunched beneath Eleven's feet as she walked through the forest. The old boots she was wearing barely blocked out the freezing air from making her toes go numb and she pulled the collar of her jacket tightly around her neck. The winter snows still blanketed much of the ground and turned the rural landscape of Indiana into what many people would consider a winter wonderland, though to quite a few others it was more of a winter hellscape.

Eleven's own opinion on the weather was mixed. On one hand, the snow made everything very pretty when a moment was taken to look and examine it all. On the other hand, she had spent nearly three months in these woods, shivering in the freezing cold while using her powers to hunt and kill wild animals all while stealing what she needed from the unsuspecting hunters that frequented the forest. It had been a lonely time, each night usually ending with her curling in whatever shelter she could find whilst trying not to think of everything that had happened since facing down the Demogorgon. But she had been alone then.

The young girls eyes flicked to her side, a small smile blooming on her face as she watched Mike slowly push his bike through the snow. He looked to be dealing with the cold better than her, most likely due to the fact that he had dealt with this kind of weather for thirteen years of his life. That didn't stop his pale cheeks going a shiny red or his teeth to chatter as another blast of wind whistled from the blue sky and through the leafless trees.

Mike's own warm brown eyes flicked to Eleven and he gave a smile as well, though there was a hint of questioning to his gaze.

"What is it?" He asked as the two of them passed over a small frozen stream.

Eleven gave a shake of her head, making her curls bob up and down. "I like looking at you".

A small laugh came from Mike, so full of warmth and affection that it made Elevens heart swell with happiness. If Mike was happy, she was

happy.

Eventually the squat cabin that had become her home came into view, the sight of grey curls of smoke ascending from the chimney and the police cruiser parked out front making it clear that Hopper was still inside. The two teens headed over, Mike leaning his bike against the porch before both of them wiped their soles on the already sodden wood of the porch. Mike rapped his fist against the door rhythmically, the secret knock devised by the group being used for the second time that day (the first being when Mike had arrived earlier that day).

Almost immediately, the sound of heavy footsteps creaked through the house before the click of the door lock was heard and Hopper swung it open. The relief on his face when he saw Eleven safe and sound was evident, his creased brow falling only to return a moment later as he saw that Mike was still there. One of his large hands reached out and affectionately ruffled his stepdaughters wild curls, getting a small giggle from her.

"You two get what you needed from the Byers?"

"Mhm". Eleven hummed in return, dipping a hand into her jacket pocket and pulling out a cassette tape, the type commonly used in a Walkman.

Hopper gave a nod and held the door open. "Alright, say goodbye to Mike and head in, there's some cocoa brewing in the kitchen".

Eleven furrowed her brow at that. It was no secret that Hopper wasn't the biggest fan of her relationship with Mike, feeling that she was too young to be in such an intense relationship (not "emotionally ready" she had heard him mutter to Joyce during the Christmas party the month before). Both stepfather and stepdaughter were quite vocal in their differing views, Eleven's bluntness when it came to speaking getting her a fair share of reprimands. She opened her mouth to protest once again when she felt a familiar, comforting grip around her hand. Mike had a reassuring smile on his face.

"Don't worry about it El, I'll come around again tomorrow. First thing in the morning".

Eleven pursed her lips before asking softly. "Promise?"

"Promise". He replied.

"Okay". She gave his hand a squeeze before reluctantly letting go. She watched the whole time as Mike left, seeing him make new trenches in the snow as he pushed his bike forwards and giving little waves every time he looked back at her. There was a lot of waving.

The moment he was out of sight and hidden by the trees, The Feeling came. A feeling that was deep in her chest, an ache that seemed to stir throughout El. It had been her constant companion throughout that entire horrible year she had been trapped inside the cabin and it always came back, without fail, whenever Mike wasn't there with her. It wasn't painful or even that uncomfortable, it just made her feel... strange.

Hopper headed to bed early that night, around 9.00 pm, due to having to attend some kind of orientation for new officers down at the station in town the next morning. The headphones pulled down over El's head drowned out the majority of his snores and the music ebbing through them did the rest. Laid on the couch, Eleven held the Walkman to her chest as she listened to each song as it came. The Walkman itself had been a Christmas gift from the Byers and one which had meant a lot to the young teen. She knew that the Byers weren't exactly flush with cash and had initially refused to take it, saying that Will or Jonathan deserved it more than her. Will had then tactfully reminded her that she had saved the world, if anything the Walkman was too LITTLE a gift. Eleven realised she wasn't going to convince them and just resolved to give them each as big a hug as she could in return.

In the few weeks she had owned it, El had made use of the device quite a few times. Relaxing in the cabin, her (too) few discreet visits into Hawkins, on one or two walks through the forest. Never when Mike was around though. She wanted to hear every word from his mouth.

The final song came to an end, the last few notes of the rhythm gradually getting more and more distant. Finally the music came to

an end completely and Eleven found herself staring at the ceiling with nothing but the sounds of Hopper's muffled snores and the creaking of the wind blown branches outside to listen to.

Turning on her side in a huff, Eleven stared at the black of the TV screen. Normally she would jump at the opportunity to watch more TV but right now, she just... wasn't in the mood. She wanted to see Mike.

And she would.

Slipping the headphones off of her head, her eyes locked onto the TV and with barely any effort it turned on, blaring a commercial for Lego. With a shrug of her shoulder, the channel changed, rapidly cycling through until it hit a screen of blaring static and noise. Then it was only a matter of grabbing the blindfold from her room and tying it around around her head, before tugging the cloth strip down to cover the eyes completely.

Faced with nothing but darkness, Eleven leaned in close to the static filled TV, not stopping until the only thing she heard was that endless buzzing. It was all encompassing, the sound seeping into her ears and infecting her mind. Then, without warning, it stopped completely and suddenly. Eleven stood in the never ending blackness that was the Void, staring out at a vast nothingness that looked to stretch on forever, endless, unremarkable, soundless except for her own breat-"Seriously?"

That voice from behind El instantly made her spin around. In the middle of the eternal blackness was a table covered with papers and small painted figures. El wasn't concerned with those though. No, she was more concerned with Mike, who sat at the head of the table and looking off to the side with an irritated look clear on his face. A smile grew on her face at the sight of him and she quickly began striding towards the table.

"No, skeletons aren't "generic", they're a classic enemy!" Mike spoke again, obviously annoyed at whoever he was speaking to.

Eleven slowed as she reached the table, looking over the surface of it at all the stuff that was piled on it. Books, sheets of paper covered in

writing and numbers, the little statuettes that Mike had dedicated an entire shelf of his room to.

"I mean what else do you think you're going to fight when you storm a Necro- Lord's fort? A gelatinous cube?"

He was cute when he was annoyed, Eleven decided as the telekinetic kneeled by Mike's side, looking at his face affectionately. She wanted to hold his hand, kiss him, wrap her arms tightly around his body. Without thinking, her small hand reached out and was about to place itself on Mike's own (the one not idly holding a can of Coke that is), as they had done many times before. Many times before in the physical world that is. It was only when they were centimetres apart that Eleven stopped herself. He would probably freak out at the feeling of an invisible hand on his own and that... well, she didn't want him feeling anything even resembling bad.

Stepping away from the table, El watched it fade and Mike's voice became more and more distant until the all encompassing blackness was gone. Instead, this blackness was that of cheap cotton covering her eyes.

After pulling off the blindfold and letting it fall to the floor, Eleven dabbed at her bloody nose with the drooped sleeve of her flannel shirt. Despite the limited contact, the sight of Mike safe and secure was enough for Eleven to fall asleep that night content and ready for another day with him.

Notes: So this chapter is basically to cover the sort of "honeymoon" period after the business with the Gate and the Snow Ball, where Mike and the rest of the Party are out of the school for the holidays and thus he has time to spend with Eleven. It's also to show Eleven's main method of keeping an eye on Mike.